

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6502

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0990

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGZQHM MASS, SU

SUBJECT: UK MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE SUDAN

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 1323, SEPT 72 (B) LONDON 4228

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT NIMAIRI' S OFFICIAL VISIT UK INCLUDED GOS REQUEST FOR RELATIVELY LARGE UK MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO SUDAN. HMG EMPHASIZING TRAINING AND CASH SALES; GOS SEEKING GRANTS, BUT HAS ALSO REPORTEDLY INDICATED IT WILLING PAY. END SUMMARY.

2. GOS- HMG PRESS RELEASE ON RECENT UK VISIT PRESIDENT NIMAIRI (REFTEL B) (MARCH 25-30) AND NIMAIRI PRESS CONFERENCE LONDON REFERRED TO REACTIVATING MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN SUDAN AND UK. WE UNDERSTAND GOS SUBMITTED " SHOPPING LIST " INCLUDING TANKS, ARMORED CARS AND AMMUNITION AS WELL AS EXPANDED TRAINING. ONE SOURCE PUT PACKAGE AT APPROXIMATE VALUE \$35 MILLION.

3. SOURCES HERE INDICATE HMG CONSIDERS GOS REQUEST EXCESSIVE, EVEN IN TERMS HISTORICAL UK MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH SUDAN BUT HMG IS PREPARED (A) SUBSTANTIALLY EXPAND (TO OVER 80
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TRAINEES ANNUALLY) TRAINING PROGRAM IN UK, AND (B) CONSIDER PROVIDING SOME LIGHT EQUIPMENT ON CASH (NOT GRANT) BASIS. HMG REPORTEDLY STRESSED GRANT FUNDS WOULD NOT BE FORTHCOMING. GOS OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT WHILE THEY NATURALLY PREFER GRANTS, CASH PURCHASES WOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM. GOS MILITARY ADEL WILL GO TO UK IN NEAR FUTURE TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS.

4. COMMENT: DETAILS THIS SUBJECT BEING CLOSELY HELD AND UK EMBOFFS HAVE COMMENTED THEY NOT FULLY INFORMED BY LONDON OF CONTENTS MILITARY AID DUSCUSSIONS. IT ALSO UNCLEAR WHETHER GOS REPORTED WILLINGNESS PURCHASE EQUIPMENT IS GENUINE OR MERELY BASED ON BELIEF THAT ONCE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ACHIEVED, CONCESSIONAL CREDITS WILL INEVITABLY FOLLOW. IN ANY EVENT, SUBSTANTIAL UK MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO SUDAN WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO (A) SUPPORTING NIMAIRI TURN TOWARD WEST, (B) ENHANCEMENT INTERNAL POLITICAL STABILITY, AND (C) SOMEWHAT DILUTE SPOTLIGHT ON USG AS SOURCE MILITARY ASSISTANCE. AT SAME TIME, ANY GOS PURCHASE SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT WITH SCARCE HARD CURRENCY COULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT ON (A) FUNDS AVAILABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND (B) GOS- IMF K CONFRONTATION ON FISCAL DISCIPLINE.
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